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DDAS Accident Report

Accident details

Report date: 19/05/2006	Accident number: 377
Accident time: 12:40	Accident Date: 28/01/2003
Where it occurred: CDS - Southern Area, 12km NE of Kandahar, Kandahar Province	Country: Afghanistan
Primary cause: Other (?)	Secondary cause: Other (?)
Class: Hostile action	Date of main report: 05/02/2003
ID original source: RG	Name of source: RONCO
Organisation: Name removed	
Mine/device: IED	Ground condition: route/path
Date record created: 22/02/2004	Date last modified: 22/02/2004
No of victims: 4	No of documents: 1

Map details

Longitude:	Latitude:
Alt. coord. system:	Coordinates fixed by:
Map east: E 0650 45'33.6	Map north: N 310 42'02.3
Map scale:	Map series:
Map edition:	Map sheet:
Map name:	

Accident Notes

no independent investigation available (?)

inadequate investigation (?)

Accident report

A report about this accident has not been made available by the country MAC. If one is sourced, that report will replace the following.

What follows is a report prepared by the Commercial demining company involved in the accident. Made public in February 2003, it has been edited for anonymity. The date recorded for the writing of this report is the date of the digital file that was made public.

The accident occurred during transit while an EOD Course was being conducted by [Commercial demining group] for an Afghan NGO. The training course had been approved by the UN MAC.

The accident occurred on a dirt track passing through dry wadi (river bed) at the Central Demolition Site (CDS) - Southern Area, which is approximately 12km North East of Qandahar City in Qandahar Province. The accident area is an arid desert area and there was dust but visibility was generally good.

The area has been used in the past as a training area for various terrorist organisations friendly with previous Taliban regime. Around September 2002 a reconnaissance of the area was conducted to determine its suitability as a demolition area. Demolitions have been carried out at the demolition area on a regular basis since then. The track is used exclusively by demining agencies for access to the demolition site.

The [Commercial company] team had been conducting a training course for an Afghan NGO. Part of the course covered the disposal of live munitions at the CDS. In preparation for the practical phase, live munitions were moved from a damaged ammunition storage point to the CDS. The first series of ammunition for disposal had been dropped off at the demolition pits and the team was heading to the CDS ammunition holding area in a Land Cruiser.

The Land Cruiser, carrying two [Commercial company] personnel and their interpreters, was travelling down the CDS feeder track back to the main track when the rear offside wheel drove over a booby-trap. The vehicle was turning away from the blast at the time of detonation and was thrown further away from the centre of the explosion. The explosion caused the vehicle to be lifted and propelled forward approx 7metres, landing on its side (nearside down).

The device involved was a "booby trap" involving: 7 (seven) 82mm Mortar Bombs mix of M72 Yugoslavian and O-832 Soviet. The method of initiation is not known – and was possibly pressure activated booby-trap switch or a PMN mine.

The four occupants of the Land Cruiser sustained minor injuries as listed below.

Casualty 1: Contusions to kidneys; Abrasion on left leg behind knee; Bump on head - left side below ear; Muscle strain on back.

Casualty 2: Deep cut to centre of head above forehead; Twisted ankle; Minor cuts on hands.

Casualty 3: Minor cut on head behind and above left ear.

Casualty 4: Contusions to muscle around ribs - left and right side; Abrasions on right knee and right elbow; Bump on head - right side above ear; Chest pains. {Casualty 4 was the author of this report.]

The Land Cruiser - supplied to UN by US DoS through [Commercial company] – sustained extensive damage to the rear wheel hub, suspension and offside bodywork.

Previous [attacks] in area

Approximately 8 hours after this [attack] another booby-trap was set off by an Afghan Military pick-up truck 1.8km west on the same main track. The booby-trap consisted of a similar number of mortar bombs and was also buried on a feeder track off the main track. In this [attack] the front offside tyre initiated the device killing the passenger and causing extensive damage to the vehicle.

Approximately 8 months previously an American EOD team was conducting a series of demolitions on the opposite side of the mountain in the same valley. This had been a long term operation disposing of a large cache of ammunition. During the operation the team triggered a booby-trap killing four members of the team. No further details are known.

A statement made by [the author of this report] has been forwarded to the COP for the Afghanistan project. There was nothing gained in forwarding statements from the Afghan staff, although statements have been made by them to the Area MAC, as they were no different from [the author's] statement. The same with [name excised] as he had no different recollection of events.

If further statements are required by [Commercial company], they can be obtained by the COP from the [country MAC's] Chief Operations Officer.

Conclusions

The [event] was one of five reported within a two day period in the Qandahar Area. It would appear that the demining agencies are being targeted at the demolition area as a result of the US military conducting large scale demolitions of munition caches within the Qandahar province.

The UXO would appear to be buried in the ground nose up with some sort of initiator on top. There were two other similar devices detonated by vehicles within a 24 hour period of this [IED-event] - all within close proximity, all using mortar bombs, which is a very common munition and can be found in large quantities in various ammunition storage points in the region.

It is difficult to see what could have been done to avoid the [IED-event] - other than not work in the area. It is fortunate that the rear wheel detonated the UXO and not the front as this would have had a very different result. The light injuries are down to the fact that the vehicle was turning away from the blast at the time of detonation and was thrown further away from the centre of the explosion. Had it been the front tyre then the vehicle would have been over the blast and would have had very different results.

Recommendations

As this was a deliberate attempt aimed at the demining agencies it is not possible to make any recommendation for change of procedures as no procedures were breached. The Kandahar Area MAC has made the sensible decision to shut down the CDS and for the moment deal with UXO in the locations they are found.

[Commercial company] / [Afghan NGO] EOD teams will only conduct large scale demolitions in areas within close proximity to military establishments until the threat level is reduced.

As we are only talking 10s of dollars, the hospital and medical fees paid for by the interpreters will be refunded from the operations fund. It would appear that [Afghan NGO] personnel always get an insurance payout when involved in any munition accident regardless of how minor the injuries - obviously that is not in our insurance contract. Perhaps the COP could discuss this with [the country MAC] and make a decision as to the right route to take in this matter. Neither injury is serious and it will not prevent them from working - although they may no longer be willing to work for us in the field after this.

A new vehicle will need to be provided for the [Commercial company] Qandahar team.

Signed: [Commercial company] EOD Technical Advisor. Qandahar, Afghanistan

Victim Report

Victim number: 491	Name: Name removed
Age: 40	Gender: Male
Status: supervisory	Fit for work: yes
Compensation: Not made available	Time to hospital: Not recorded
Protection issued: Not recorded	Protection used: Not recorded

Summary of injuries:

INJURIES

minor Back

minor Body

minor Head

minor Leg

COMMENT

No medical report was made available

Victim Report

Victim number: 492

Name: Name removed

Age: 22

Gender: Male

Status: Trainer

Fit for work: yes

Compensation: Not made available

Time to hospital: Not recorded

Protection issued: Not recorded

Protection used: Not recorded

Summary of injuries:

INJURIES

minor Hands

minor Head

minor Leg

COMMENT

No medical report was made available.

Victim Report

Victim number: 493

Name: Name removed

Age: 22

Gender: Male

Status: Trainer

Fit for work: yes

Compensation: Not made available

Time to hospital: Not recorded

Protection issued: Not recorded

Protection used: Not recorded

Summary of injuries:

INJURIES

minor Head

COMMENT

No formal medical report was made available.

Victim Report

Victim number: 494	Name: Name removed
Age: 42	Gender: Male
Status: supervisory	Fit for work: yes
Compensation: Not made available	Time to hospital: Not recorded
Protection issued: Not recorded	Protection used: Not recorded

Summary of injuries:

INJURIES

minor Arm

minor Body

minor Chest

minor Head

minor Leg

COMMENT

No medical report was made available.

Analysis

The fact that there were several similar attacks to this in the area at around the same time support the assumption that this was not a “missed device” but an example of the Mine Action staff being deliberately targeted.

While the report is unusually detailed for this theatre, it did not include all relevant data and the author omitted the statements of others, so the investigation is listed as inadequate because it does not meet the IMAS requirements for accident investigation. The demining group who made the report public are to be congratulated for their transparency.